

EXHIBIT P

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
et al.,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

AMERICAN AIRLINES GROUP
INC. and JETBLUE AIRWAYS
CORPORATION,

Defendants.

Civil Action

No. 1:21-cv-11558-LTS

DEPOSITION OF NATHAN H. MILLER, Ph.D.

Washington, DC

August 17, 2022

Reported by: John L. Harmonson, RPR

Job No. 213777

1 N. MILLER

2 -----
3 AFTERNOON SESSION
4 1:18 p.m.
5 -----

6 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are back on the 13:19
7 record at 1:18. 13:19

8 BY MR. WALL: 13:19

9 Q. All right. Let's pick up with sort of 13:19
10 the basic question of why you're simulating that 13:19
11 the NEA is like a merger. So let me begin and 13:19
12 let's see if we can agree on a few things. 13:19

13 So you agree that technically, 13:19
14 formalistically, the NEA is not a merger; right? 13:19

15 A. That's right. It's an agreement 13:19
16 between JetBlue and American. 13:19

17 Q. It's a bilateral contract or set of 13:19
18 contracts. 13:19

19 A. Okay. 13:19

20 Q. So American doesn't have any right to 13:19
21 choose board members for JetBlue or vice versa; 13:19
22 right? 13:20

23 A. Okay. 13:20

24 Q. I mean, is that consistent with your 13:20
25 understanding? 13:20

1 N. MILLER

2 A. Yes, it is. 13:20

3 Q. Okay. The NEA is not going to lead to 13:20
4 the elimination of the JetBlue brand; correct? 13:20

5 A. I haven't seen any evidence that it 13:20
6 would. 13:20

7 Q. Okay. Nor the American brand; right? 13:20

8 A. Same for American. 13:20

9 Q. Okay. And you haven't seen any 13:20
10 evidence that the NEA requires JetBlue to adopt 13:20
11 or conform to American's so-called legacy or 13:20
12 general network carrier business model, have you? 13:20

13 A. No, I don't think there is language 13:20
14 that requires JetBlue to do that. 13:20

15 Q. There is no permanent transfer of 13:20
16 assets through the NEA, is there? 13:20

17 A. No. 13:20

18 Q. And there is no pricing coordination 13:20
19 in the NEA, is there? 13:20

20 A. I do not believe the NEA provides a 13:20
21 structure for JetBlue and American to talk about 13:21
22 the prices that they're setting. 13:21

23 Q. There is no aggregate capacity 13:21
24 coordination of the kind that Dr. Town talks 13:21
25 about in his report in connection with capacity 13:21

1 N. MILLER

2 discipline, is there? 13:21

3 A. The NEA is a bilateral contract 13:21
4 between American and JetBlue, and I believe 13:21
5 Professor Town when he talks about capacity 13:21
6 coordination, what you're referring to is 13:21
7 something more industry-wide, and the contract is 13:21
8 going to cover coordination of capacity between 13:21
9 JetBlue and American specifically. 13:21

10 Q. But it doesn't -- they do not discuss 13:21
11 or coordinate the setting of their industry-wide 13:21
12 capacity; the size of their fleets, for example, 13:21
13 those sorts of things? 13:22

14 A. Certainly I think that the results 13:22
15 would have bearing on that. But I believe what 13:22
16 the agreement allows for is coordination on 13:22
17 capacity in routes that connect to an NEA 13:22
18 airport. 13:22

19 Q. Okay. So then go ahead and -- in 13:22
20 light of all of that, go ahead and just explain 13:22
21 for the record why it is that you believe that 13:22
22 the competitive effects of the NEA can be fairly 13:22
23 addressed through a merger simulation. 13:22

24 A. Sure. First of all, for 13:22
25 clarification, the model that I'm using 13:22

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2 characterizes the incentives that are created by 13:23
3 the NEA specifically, not those of a generic 13:23
4 merger. So I prefer to call it just the 13:23
5 simulation model. 13:23

6 The model incorporates that when the 13:23
7 NEA is in place and in effect on particular 13:23
8 routes, that JetBlue benefits if American's 13:23
9 revenue increase, and American benefits if 13:23
10 JetBlue revenue increase. And that creates 13:23
11 incentives, according to economic theory, to 13:23
12 raise price in a way that's mutually beneficial 13:23
13 for JetBlue and American along the particular 13:23
14 markets that I've studied. And that's laid out 13:23
15 in Section 4 of the report. 13:24

16 Of course the NEA is more broad than 13:24
17 only the sharing of revenue. It also creates an 13:24
18 avenue for capacity coordination. And I've 13:24
19 considered the arguments that were put forth by 13:24
20 the defendants' economist in the course of the 13:24
21 investigation, and also put forth by Dr. Israel 13:24
22 in his expert report that the NEA would provide 13:24
23 unilateral incentives for each party to expand 13:24
24 output. 13:24

25 And I've pointed out both in my report 13:24

1 N. MILLER

2 and in my initial report, reply report, that it 13:24
3 would be inappropriate to consider those 13:25
4 unilateral incentives in a context in which 13:25
5 JetBlue and American are coordinating. 13:25

6 In fact, if they were to act on the 13:25
7 unilateral incentives of the MGIA to expand 13:25
8 capacity instead of coordinating capacity with 13:25
9 each other, the effect would be that each party 13:25
10 would subsidize unprofitable expansion of the 13:25
11 other and thereby exploit the other partner. 13:25
12 Joint profits would go down. 13:25

13 And therefore, it does not seem 13:25
14 reasonable or likely that decisions taken in the 13:25
15 midst of capacity coordination would undermine or 13:25
16 alter the effects of revenue sharing on pricing 13:25
17 incentives that the agreement creates. 13:26

18 And that is the way that my model 13:26
19 captures the incentives that are created by the 13:26
20 NEA. 13:26

21 Q. Okay. Thank you. 13:26

22 So in Section 4.1 of your initial 13:26
23 report, around page 21, you lay out your argument 13:26
24 that incentive alignment, not a change in 13:26
25 coordination or control, is what makes a 13:26

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2 that are most meaningful, I believe. 14:03

3 Q. In the case of nonstop overlap routes 14:03
4 that touch the NEA airports, how, if at all, does 14:03
5 your simulation differ from a generic merger 14:03
6 simulation? 14:03

7 A. Those routes also can feature connect 14:03
8 traffic from American or JetBlue, or possibly 14:03
9 both. And in those settings, the effects of the 14:03
10 competing nonstop, the prices that are put on the 14:03
11 competing nonstop route -- or on the connect 14:03
12 route are only partially internalized, which is 14:03
13 consistent with the terms of the NEA. 14:04

14 Q. Okay. So if I understand it, what 14:04
15 you're saying is, say for example, San Francisco 14:04
16 to New York, that some amount of the passengers 14:04
17 are going to go New York, Chicago, to San 14:04
18 Francisco. In a generic merger simulation, that 14:04
19 would be fully internalized. But in this 14:04
20 simulation, that particular feature of the 14:04
21 connect traffic that competes with the nonstop 14:04
22 traffic is subject to partial internalization? 14:04

23 A. That's correct. 14:04

24 Q. Okay. Anything else besides that? 14:04

25 A. As I said, aside from the, you know, 14:04

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2 trying to constrain it only to NEA markets, I 14:04

3 think those are the big two that came to mind. 14:04

4 But I'll refer you to the report because there 14:04

5 might be nuances that come up, you know, looking 14:04

6 at different markets. 14:05

7 Q. Okay. So focusing back on the 14:05

8 importance of revenue sharing, is it appropriate 14:05

9 to analyze the effects of the NEA on routes in 14:05

10 which the parties do not share revenues as a 14:05

11 merger? Let me say that again. I kind of 14:05

12 botched it. 14:05

13 Is it appropriate to predict the 14:05

14 competitor effects of the NEA on nonstop overlap 14:05

15 routes on which the parties do not share revenue? 14:05

16 MR. DeRITA: Objection to form. 14:05

17 THE WITNESS: It can be appropriate. 14:06

18 And I believe that I've done so in my report in 14:06

19 the sense that I've tried to get a sense for how 14:06

20 outcomes might change in other markets if the 14:06

21 competitive effects of the NEA extend beyond what 14:06

22 is explicitly covered in the NEA agreement. 14:06

23 BY MR. WALL: 14:06

24 Q. I'm sorry. I'm not talking about -- 14:06

25 my question was limited to the nonstop overlap 14:06

1 N. MILLER

2 routes. There's a number of carve-out routes in 14:06
3 which there's no revenue sharing; right? 14:06

4 A. I thought you were talking about, for 14:06
5 example, maybe Miami to LA. 14:06

6 Q. No, that's not what I'm talking about. 14:06
7 I'm talking like, for example, Boston to 14:06
8 Charlotte, Boston to Philadelphia, Boston to 14:06
9 Phoenix. 14:06

10 A. Okay. With that in mind, could you 14:06
11 ask the question? I'll try to get through it. 14:06

12 Q. Yeah. 14:06

13 Can you explain to me how you can 14:06
14 justify predicting the competitive effects of the 14:06
15 NEA as if it were a merger with respect to those 14:07
16 nonstop overlap routes that are carved out of 14:07
17 revenue sharing? 14:07

18 A. I am -- I have doubts as to the 14:07
19 effectiveness of the proposed carve-outs. And as 14:07
20 a result of those doubts, I elected to provide 14:07
21 results summarizing the likely competitive 14:07
22 effects both including and excluding the six 14:07
23 carve-out routes. 14:07

24 Q. What is the basis of your doubts about 14:07
25 the effectiveness of revenue sharing? 14:07

N. MILLER

A. First, my understanding is that American and JetBlue can modify the NEA as they wish, and so a carve-out that exists now may not exist in the future.

Second, the NEA capacity coordination that I think matters quite a deal here, it may be hard to separate out flight decisions along one particular route from flight decisions at airports like New York or like Boston where the route connects. And in that sense, it could well be that the carve-out routes are intertwined with NEA decisions even though they are carved out.

Furthermore, there is some prospect that the NEA creates a willingness of American and JetBlue to soften price competition between them in these markets where there is not a lot of other competitors in a way that would harm consumers.

And putting those together, I determined that it would be appropriate to report results that both include and exclude the carve-out routes.

Q. Do you have an opinion, however, as to whether the harms that you quantify with respect

1 N. MILLER

2 to the carve-out routes are likely to 14:09
3 materialize? 14:09

4 A. I have concerns about the 14:09
5 effectiveness of the carve-outs in the contracts 14:09
6 in ameliorating harm. And I'll note that if 14:10
7 there is a way for the parties to soften price 14:10
8 competition along those routes it would be 14:10
9 profitable to do so. 14:10

10 And so I do view it as reasonably 14:10
11 likely that harm would occur along those routes. 14:10

12 Q. Okay. I know you're sort of new to 14:10
13 this game. But, sir, do you understand that in 14:10
14 litigation an expert is allowed only to testify 14:10
15 to opinions that he or she has reached as a 14:10
16 result of some analysis consistent with their 14:10
17 expertise? 14:10

18 MR. DeRITA: Objection to form. 14:10

19 THE WITNESS: Yes. 14:10

20 BY MR. WALL: 14:10

21 Q. Okay. And have you or have you not 14:10
22 reached an opinion as to whether the harms on the 14:10
23 carve-out routes are what you quantify them to 14:10
24 be? 14:10

25 A. I think that there is likely to be 14:10

N. MILLER

substantial harm on the carve-out routes due to concerns that I have about the carve-outs.

Q. How likely?

A. Reasonably likely.

Q. You said that. That's why I followed up. How likely is reasonably likely?

A. I haven't quantified a particular percentage if that's what you're asking for.

Q. More or less likely than the harm on the routes that are actually subject to revenue sharing?

A. Oh, okay. I do observe that the carve-outs are intended to fix competitive problems. They may be successful at doing so. I have doubts. And so, you know, if you had to rank the likelihoods, I would say, you know, at the top would be the ones that are not subject to the carve-outs, and below that would be the ones that are subject to the carve-outs.

Q. Do you have any basis for believing that, notwithstanding the carve-outs, American and JetBlue are sharing revenues on the carve-out routes?

A. No, I do not believe that they share

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2 revenue on the carve-out routes. 14:12

3 Q. So right now, American has no stake in 14:12
4 JetBlue's revenues on those carve-out routes and 14:12
5 JetBlue has no stake in American's revenues on 14:12
6 those carve-out routes; correct? 14:12

7 A. There is no direct financial stake. 14:12

8 Q. So if they are thinking of adjusting 14:12
9 their pricing based upon the internalization of 14:12
10 diversion from one to the other, there is no 14:12
11 point to it right now because they don't 14:12
12 internalize the diversion, do they? 14:12

13 A. No. That's correct. There would not 14:13
14 be internalization about diversion so long as the 14:13
15 routes remain carved out. 14:13

16 Q. You are aware, aren't you, that MGIA 14:13
17 is structured similarly to the revenue-sharing 14:13
18 provisions in the Atlantic joint business? 14:13

19 A. I've read a representation that that's 14:13
20 the case but I have not studied the other 14:13
21 agreements. 14:13

22 Q. That was going to be my question to 14:13
23 you. Have you done anything to study the 14:13
24 incentive effects or behavioral effects of 14:13
25 revenue sharing in the Atlantic joint business or 14:13

1 N. MILLER

2 C E R T I F I C A T E

3
4 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

5 I, JOHN L. HARMONSON, a Notary Public
6 within and for the District of Columbia, do
7 hereby certify that NATHAN H. MILLER, Ph.D., the
8 witness whose deposition is hereinbefore set
9 forth, was duly sworn by me and that such
10 deposition is a true record of the testimony
11 given by such witness.

12 That before completion of the
13 proceedings, review and signature of the
14 transcript was requested.

15 I further certify that I am not related
16 to any of the parties to this action by blood or
17 marriage; and that I am in no way interested in
18 the outcome of this matter.

19 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
20 my hand this 22nd day of August, 2022.

21
22 

23 _____
JOHN L. HARMONSON, RPR

24 My commission expires: 04/14/26
25